egotism of Mrs. Gereth will not allow the beauties of Poynton to fall into the hands of the barbarous Mona Bridgstock. Owen wants the spoils, firstly, because they are his by law, and, secondly, because Mona will not marry him if they are not restored to him by Mrs. Gereth. Mona's possessive egotism wants the beauties for the mere pride of possession. She must have things which are prized so much by others. She is greedy in so vulgar a sense that she would rather give up Owen than marry him without the beauties of Poynton. In fact, she appears to be more in love with the spoils than with Owen; in other words, she reduces him into a materialistic fetish identified with the spoils. She refuses to marry Owen until the spoils are restored to Poynton, and when this happens owing to a miscalculation on the part of Mrs. Gereth, Mona seizes the opportunity to get married to Owen promptly. Like a true barbarian, she believes that in order to enjoy a thing one should possess it. What she does not know is that spiritual delight of artistic creations can neither be purchased nor exclusively possessed like material objects. The barbarisation of the spoils results in their destruction. Once the craving to possess is satisfied, the object possessed loses all its fascination; and art which stands for permanence and eternity passes into the obsolescence of mere things which are subject to mutability and time. Eternity is mortgaged to time, the durable to the ephemeral. It is not therefore surprising that the spoils are destroyed by an accidental fire in the absence of the owners.

Mrs. Gereth's concern for the safety of the beauties of Poynton is good as an end, but her means to it are so self-centralized that her purpose produces evil, and, instead of saving the beauties, destroys them. It is her presumptuous aesthetic egotism which makes her deny the means of aesthetic delight to others on the ground that they are incapable of responding to aesthetic experience. By seeking to make aesthetic experience exclusive to connoisseurs, Mrs. Gereth is

denying
possibilities of refinement to people at large in society. Art, a window
on the light and beauty of the world, no longer yields its clues of
perception, or its glimpses of consciousness, once the human mind
draws up its insensitive shutters of furtive jealousy, or rebellious
pride. Art is self-sustaining, and needs.no champions or saviours to
espouse its cause. Refined aestheticlsm consists in an awareness of
the autonomous and civilizing nature of art. Because of her presump-
tuous aesthetic egotism, Mrs. Gereth is as intensely greedy to posses
beauty as Mona is, by reason of her materialistic egotism, The